



## Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Bruce Rauner, Governor  
Wayne Rosenthal, Director

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### **IDNR Seeking Federal Grant to Begin Development of OHV Trail Facility at Sahara Woods SFWA**

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will seek a \$1.5 million federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant for the first phase of design and development of a public off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail facility at the Sahara Woods State Fish and Wildlife Area in Saline Co.

“Governor Rauner has asked the IDNR and the Illinois Greenways and Trails Council to proceed with seeking federal funding for a facility in southern Illinois to provide OHV enthusiasts with a great place for off-road riding,” said IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal. “Sahara Woods, with its reclaimed strip mined land, is an ideal location for providing a challenging series of trails for riders to enjoy.”

IDNR has promoted and supported development of OHV riding areas through an OHV grant program that provides financial assistance to local governments and eligible groups and individuals for development of off-highway vehicle parks and trails. The Sahara Woods OHV facility, which would be developed on a portion of the site, would be the first on lands managed by the IDNR.

Federal RTP grants are funded through a portion of motor fuel excise taxes collected from non-highway recreational use, including all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, and snowmobiles. Federal law requires that a portion of each state’s RTP funding must be earmarked for motorized trail projects, including trail construction, support facilities, and restoration of areas adjacent to trails.

Sahara Woods State Fish and Wildlife Area is located west of Harrisburg on Illinois Route 13. The former mine property was donated by Sahara Coal Company to the State of Illinois, which assumed ownership in 1999. Following mine reclamation work on the site, recreation opportunities include hunting and fishing.

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The Illinois Greenways and Trails Council will review the proposed Sahara Woods OHV project and RTP grant application at its meeting on May 18 at the Illinois Department of Transportation headquarters in Springfield.

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